

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 143 954

CG 011 741

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TITLE Females' Evaluations of Males as a Function of Affect
Arousing Musical Stimuli.
PUB DATE May 77
NOTE 22p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the
Midwestern Psychological Association (Chicago,
Illinois, May 5-7, 1977)
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College, North Adams, Mass., 01247
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.83 HC-\$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Affective Behavior; Behavioral Science Research;
*Females; *Interpersonal Relationship; Motivation;
*Music; *Stimulus Behavior
IDENTIFIERS *Physical Attractiveness

ABSTRACT

Female subjects were asked to evaluate either an attractive or unattractive male stimulus person under one of the three experimental conditions; while listening to avant-garde, rock music, or no music at all. Responding on the Interpersonal Judgement Scale (IJS: Byrne, 1971) and a seven-point physical attractiveness scale, subjects indicated more positive evaluations of and attraction toward attractive than unattractive stimulus person. In addition, subjects responded with more positive evaluations of, greater attraction toward, and more positive assessments of physical attractiveness under the rock music than under the avant-garde music condition. These results are discussed in terms of the Byrne-Clore reinforcement-affect model of interpersonal attraction with implications for future research. (Author)

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Females' Evaluations of Males as a Function of Affect
Arousing Musical Stimuli

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The authors would like to thank Larry Hamilton for his gracious and expert assistance in selecting, categorizing, and recording the musical selections used in this study. Requests for reprints should be sent to James L. May, Department of Psychology, North Adams State College, North Adams, Mass., 01247.

Paper presented at the Forty-ninth Annual Meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, Ill.: May 5-7, 1977.

CG 011741

There appears to be generally broad acceptance among psychologists that affective and motivational processes influence the perception of both physical and social stimuli (Jenkins, 1957; Tafjel, 1969). Despite this general acceptance, there has not been a great deal of attention directed to the specific role of affective factors in the process of interpersonal and social perception. Furthermore, the interpretation of much of the relevant research has been hampered somewhat by a lack of distinction between the affective state of the subject, and the affective value of the stimulus object to which she is responding.

Recently, Byrne (1971) has argued that people respond to their interpersonal world primarily on the basis of their subjective feelings rather than cognitive or intellectual factors (p. 415). There is substantial evidence to support at least part of that argument. Using agreeing and disagreeing attitudinal stimuli, which have been shown to have affect eliciting properties (Byrne & Clore, 1970), a number of investigators have reported subject's evaluations of and judgments concerning stimulus persons are influenced by the purported agreement between the subject and the stimulus person (Aves & Byrne, Note 1; Byrne & Clore, 1970; Golightly, Huffman, & Byrne, 1972; Griffitt & Jackson, 1970, 1973). Other investigators have reported that manipulation of affective stimuli independent of the stimulus person, but which are merely present in the situation at the time the subject makes her evaluation of the stimulus, similarly influence interpersonal evaluations and judgments (Griffitt, 1970; Griffitt & Veitch, 1971; Veitch & Griffitt, 1976; Maslow & Mintz, 1956; Peach, Note 2; Schwartz, Note 3). For example, it has been found that manipulations of ambient temperature and density result

in more negative evaluations of stimulus persons under conditions of high density and hot temperature than under less dense and more normal temperature conditions (Griffitt, 1970; Griffitt & Veitch, 1971). Similarly evaluations of a stimulus person made while listening to "good" or "bad" news playing on a radio in the same room as the subject have also been found to be differentially influenced by the affective quality of the newscast, independently of the characteristics of the person evaluated (Veitch & Griffitt, 1976). The evidence clearly indicates, then, that interpersonal evaluations and judgments are influenced by affective arousal merely associated in time with the stimulus person being judged, independently of any affective arousal directly attributable to the stimulus person.

It is not so well established that affective stimuli influence other kinds of interpersonal perceptions in a similar manner. In one study, Bleda (1972) found that subjects' perceptions of a stimulus person's height, judged under ambiguous viewing conditions, were affected by the extent to which they believed the stimulus person to agree with their own attitudes. Stimulus persons perceived as agreeing with the subject were seen as taller in height than were disagreeing stimulus persons. While the above study clearly indicates that perceptions of height are influenced by affect eliciting attitude stimuli, since the affect arousal can be directly attributed to the stimulus person (i.e., he agrees with me), it does not provide a test of the hypothesis that affective arousal independent of the stimulus person can influence perceptual judgments of that person through mere association. The purpose of the present study, then, is to carry out a test of that hypothesis.

Folklore has it that music, as a general class of stimuli, has a strong

effects on individual affective states. Not only is it believed that music has the power to "soothe," but it is also believed to be a potent tool in the process of sexual seduction, both in our own culture and in others (Ford & Beach, 1951). Empirically, there is substantital evidence that music does indeed have the capability of influencing affective states. Numerous investigators have obtained a variety of self-reported affective responses and moods among subjects in response to musical stimulation (Capurso, 1952; Hevner, 1935, 1936; Mursell, 1937; Schoen & Gatewood, 1927). More recently, others have found that musical stimuli evoke such differential physiological response associated with affect arousal as galvanic skin responses (GSR), and changes in cardiac rates and blood pressure (Landreth & Landreth, 1974; Lundin, 1967; Peretti, 1975; Zimmy & Weidenfeller, 1963). On the basis of this evidence, and by virtue of the fact that music, whether emanating from a Muzak system or a transistor radio, is so commonly a part of our environment as to be almost unnoticeable the introduction of differential affect eliciting musical stimuli into a setting in which subjects were to evaluate a stranger depicted in a photograph appeared an ideal means by which to test the major hypothesis of this study.

The specific purpose of this study, then, is to test the hypotheses that positive and negative affect eliciting musical stimuli will differentially influence interpersonal evaluations and perceptions of physical attractiveness.

Method

Selection of the musical stimuli¹

The musical stimuli used in this study were selections of rock and avant-garde music which had been determined in pilot research to elicit positive and negative affective responses, respectively. Using a feelings scale adapted from Byrne and Sheffield (1965), pilot subjects evaluated their own affective states following randomized presentations of musical selections drawn from 13 categories of musical style determined with the assistance of a professional musician. Previous research (Byrne, Fisher, Lamberth, & Mitchell, 1974) has shown that the feelings scale yields orthogonal measures of positive and negative affective responses. Analysis of the responses to the positive dimension of the feelings scale, using a dependent means t -test, revealed that rock music elicited more positive affective responses ($\bar{M} = 16.5$) than did avant-garde music ($\bar{M} = 11.4$, $t = 3.23$, $p < .01$, one-tailed). Similarly, analysis of the negative dimension of the feelings scale produced analogous results, with avant-garde music eliciting more negative affective responses ($\bar{M} = 7.29$) than did the rock music selections ($\bar{M} = 5.25$; $t = 3.16$, $p < .01$, one-tailed). On the basis of these results, randomly chosen selections of rock music and avant-garde music were used as the positive and negative affective musical stimuli, respectively, in this study.

Selection of photographic stimuli

As it was necessary to use photographs of males unknown to the potential subjects, the assistance of a professional photographer was used in selecting the photographs of the stimulus males. Several photographs of young white males from the photographer's files were inspected and two which yielded agreement on subjective impressions of attractiveness, equivalence of dress, and highly unlikely to be known to students on campus were selected. Each photo-

graph, depicting a head and shoulders portrait of a casually attired white male, about 20 years of age, was then enlarged to 8" x 10" (20.3cm x 25.4cm) size. Eighteen additional pilot subjects, all female, then evaluated the pictured males on a 7-point semantic differential-type physical attractiveness scale in a counterbalanced design. The end-points of the scale were anchored by the terms "extremely unattractive" (1) and "extremely attractive" (7). Analysis of these evaluations using a dependent means t-test revealed reliable differences in the perceived physical attractiveness of the two males ($M_s = 3.94$ vs 5.39 ; $t = 2.34$, $p < .05$, one-tailed).

Subjects

Thirty undergraduate women were recruited from general psychology classes at North Adams State College to participate in a study on rating pictures. As an inducement to volunteer, they were offered bonus points to be added to their final grade in the course. Participation was limited to females as previous research (Beardslee & Fogelson, 1958) has shown that females are highly responsive to musical stimuli and more responsive than males to such stimuli, and to insure that a sufficient number of subjects were obtained for all conditions.

Procedure

The experimental design was a 2 (unattractive and attractive photograph) x 3 (rock music, avant-garde music, or no music) factorial. The order of presentation of the experimental conditions was randomly determined and subjects, in groups of two to five, were assigned to the conditions as they reported for the experiment. In the two music conditions, either rock or avant-garde music could be heard playing at a moderate, but audible level, as the subjects entered the experimental room. There was no background music, of

course, in the no music condition. The room, itself, was fairly large (28' x 24": 8.53m x 9.75m), and contained a number of laboratory tables holding equipment, a desk in one corner, and two conference tables on the far side of the room from the desk. The desk had been arranged to appear as if someone had been interrupted while working at it, with open books, papers, pencils, and various other personal items scattered across the top surface. A combination AM-FM radio/cassette recorder was situated on one corner of the desk, and one of two previously recorded stimulus tapes was playing on the "radio."

The subjects were seated around the conference tables, approximately 20 feet (6.10m) from the desk, facing away from the radio. The experimenter introduced the experiment as a study of how people form impressions of the personality of others on the basis of physical appearance. The subjects were then told that some material had been prepared for them to read which would explain the theory and facts of what was known about person perception and would help them complete the task they were to do. A four page mimeographed excerpt from chapter one of Hastorf, Polefka, and Schneider (1970) was distributed and subjects were instructed to read it carefully, although they were assured they would not be tested on the material later. This material was not included for the subjects' benefit, however, but was actually intended to permit exposure to the musical stimuli, without drawing specific attention to it. A maximum of 15 minutes reading time was allowed, based upon pre-testing which indicated that even a poor reader could complete the excerpt in that time.

When all subjects had completed the excerpt, or after 15 minutes had elapsed, the experimenter introduced the experimental task. Subjects were

told they would be given a black and white photograph of a male college student "from another college in the area" which they were to study, form as clear an impression of what this person might be like as they could, and then were to record their impressions of the student on the scales accompanying the photographs. At this point, photographs of either the "unattractive" or the "attractive" stimulus person were distributed to the subjects, along with copies of the Interpersonal Judgment Scale (IJS: Byrne, 1971) and the 7-point physical attractiveness scale described previously. Then the subjects were asked to evaluate the stimulus person's intelligence, knowledgeability of current events, morality, and personal adjustment, and to indicate how much they thought they might like and would want to work with this person. Finally, they were asked to evaluate the stimulus person on the physical attractiveness scale in terms of how attractive they, themselves, thought him to be.

No subjects in either music condition expressed any suspicion of the music manipulation, although one subject in the avant-garde condition did ask that the radio be turned down. She was given a standard reply, prepared in advance, to the effect that the experimenter had borrowed the room for her experiment, and Dr. May had specifically asked her not to bother anything on the desk as he was working on a very important project and didn't want anything disturbed. This reply apparently was convincing as no further request was made, nor did this subject or any other indicate any awareness during debriefing that the music was a variable of interest in the study. When all the responses had been recorded and collected, the subjects were debriefed as to the real nature of the study, thanked for their participation, and the experimenter elicited a promise that they would not discuss the study

with other students for at least three weeks.

Results

A standard index of interpersonal attraction was obtained by summing subjects' responses to the IJS items assessing liking for and preference for working with the stimulus person. This index, along with the buffer items concerning the evaluations of intelligence, knowledgeability, morality, and personal adjustment of the stimulus person, as well as the responses to the physical attractiveness scale were analyzed using separate 2 (photographs) x 3 (music conditions) analyses of variance.

The results of the analyses of the dependent measures as a function of the attractiveness manipulation are presented in Table 1. A check on the effectiveness of the attractiveness manipulation is provided by the main effect for the evaluation of the stimulus person's physical attractiveness as a function of the photograph conditions. As can be seen, the manipulation appears to have been successful, $F(1, 24) = 9.23$, $p < .01$, with the more attractive stimulus person judged to be significantly more physically attractive ($M = 5.27$) than the unattractive stimulus person ($M = 4.06$).

Insert Table 1 about here

As expected, the analysis also indicated that the attractiveness of the stimulus person had a strong effect on interpersonal evaluative responses. As shown in Table 1, the attractive stimulus person was judged to be more intelligent, $F(1, 24) = 8.34$, $p < .01$, more moral, $F(1, 24) = 13.08$, $p < .005$, and as better adjusted, $F(1, 24) = 14.51$, $p < .001$, than the unattractive stimulus person. Similarly, interpersonal attraction was more positive toward the at-

tractive than toward the unattractive stimulus person, $F(1, 24) = 21.43$, $p < .001$.

The analyses of variance also revealed significant effects on interpersonal evaluations and perceptions due to the music conditions. Among the buffer items of the IJS, significant effects were found for evaluations of intelligence, $F(2, 24) = 3.93$, $p < .05$, and morality, $F(2, 24) = 4.48$, $p < .05$. Comparisons of the individual means using the Newman-Keuls procedure revealed that evaluations of intelligence were significantly more positive under the rock music condition than either the avant-garde or no music conditions, while the latter two did not differ from each other (see Table 2). On the other hand, as shown in Table 2, evaluations of morality were significantly more negative under the avant-garde music condition than under the no music or rock music conditions, which did not differ.

Additional effects were also found for music conditions in interpersonal attraction responses, $F(2, 24) = 11.67$, $p < .001$. As can be seen from Table 2, comparison of the means indicated that less positive attraction responses were obtained under the avant-garde than under the no music or rock music conditions, with no differences in responses between the no music and rock music conditions.

Insert Table 2 about here

A test of the hypothesis that interpersonal perceptions are influenced by affective stimuli merely associated in time with the stimulus person was conducted by examining the effect of music conditions on the evaluation of the stimulus persons physical attractiveness collapsed across attractiveness conditions. The analysis of variance of this measure yielded a significant

effect due to music conditions, $F(2, 24) = 4.22, p < .05$. As shown in Table 2, comparisons of the means revealed that the stimulus person was judged to be significantly more attractive in the rock music than in the avant-garde condition. Evaluations of the stimulus person's attractiveness were also more positive under the rock music condition than under the no music condition, while evaluations of physical attractiveness in the no music and avant-garde music conditions did not differ.

Finally, an unexpected interaction between the stimulus person's attractiveness and the music conditions was obtained in the evaluations of intelligence, $F(2, 24) = 3.40, p < .05$. Post-hoc comparisons using the Newman-Keuls procedure indicated that this interaction was entirely due to significantly more positive evaluations of the intelligence of the attractive stimulus person under the rock music condition as compared to all other combinations of attractiveness and music conditions ($p < .01$, all comparisons). While these results suggest that an attractive person associated with positive affective stimuli is perceived to be more intelligent by females than an attractive male associated with negative affective stimuli, or with no affective stimuli, and more intelligent than an unattractive male regardless of the association with affective stimuli, it is not clear as to why these findings were not also obtained with respect to the other interpersonal evaluations, if they are indeed reliable.

Discussion

The findings of the present study that physically attractive males are evaluated as more intelligent, more moral, and better adjusted, and are better liked by females than are their less attractive counterparts, are consistent with a general body of research showing the potent effects of physical attrac-

tiveness on a variety of interpersonal judgments of character and preference (Dion, 1972; Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972; Efran, 1974), and particularly with regard to evaluations between opposite sex persons (Curran & Lippold, 1975; Walster, Aronson, Abrahams, & Rottman, 1966).

Furthermore, the finding that positive and negative affect eliciting musical stimuli differentially influence interpersonal evaluations of intelligence and morality, and interpersonal attraction responses is also consistent with a substantial amount of research indicating that positive and negative affective stimuli which are merely associated with, but not attributable to, a stimulus person result in differentially positive or negative interpersonal evaluations and attraction responses (Gouaux, 1971; Griffitt, 1970; Griffitt & Veitch, 1971; Veitch & Griffitt, 1976). The additional findings that women subjects viewed males as more physically attractive under the affectively positive rock music condition than under the negative avant-garde condition clearly provides support for the primary hypothesis of the study. More generally, these results also support the broader proposition that affect eliciting stimuli, which are merely associated with a stimulus person, but which are not the result of any stimulus property or value of that person, exert a general influence on interpersonal judgments and perceptions. While the specific nature of this effect is not well delineated by the present study, it seems possible that the effect of affective stimuli on evaluations and perceptions would be most likely to occur under conditions of considerable uncertainty or of high ambiguity in which there is no clear external referent or internal standard of judgment.

It is not clear, either, from the results of the present study whether the effects of the associated affective stimuli are due to some distortion

or modification of the subject's perception of the quality of appearance of the stimulus person, or are better conceptualized as the result of a temporary fluctuation in some internal affective state which then serves to mediate subsequent interpersonal judgments and evaluations. Answers to these questions must await the conduct of further research specifically directed toward these issues.

One means of interpreting the results of the present study is in terms of the reinforcement-affect model of interpersonal attraction (Byrne & Clore, 1970; Clore & Byrne, 1974). According to this model, stimuli which elicit affective responses serve as unconditioned stimuli and through a process analogous to classical conditioning, neutral stimuli associated with them acquire the capacity to elicit similar affective responses which then mediate subsequent evaluations of the previously neutral stimulus object or person. Interpretation in these terms has the advantage of leading to some specific hypotheses for testing. For example, a strict classical conditioning interpretation would lead to the prediction that subsequent assessments of the stimulus person's physical attractiveness made in the absence of the affective stimulus should be substantially the same as those obtained while the stimuli were associated or paired.

It is very tempting to draw inferences and conclusions totally unwarranted on the basis of the actual data. The extent to which the present results do have any direct implications for interpersonal responding and attraction processes is still uncertain. It is possible to speculate, however, that the apparent effect of musical stimuli on the sexual behavior of females (Schiller, 1971) may be partly due, not only to the arousal of implicit sexual feelings in response to pleasant music, but also to some re-evaluation of the available

male so that he is perceived as more attractive and more suitable as a sexual partner than might otherwise be the case.

Finally, the present study clearly demonstrates the utility of employing musical stimuli as a means of manipulating affective responses. At the present, we are conducting research using this manipulation to investigate Freedman's (1975) suggestion that crowding serves as an "intensifier" of the positive or negative responses already present in social situations.

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Table 1

Mean Responses and Levels of Significance of Females' Evaluations of
Unattractive and Attractive Male Stimulus Persons

Evaluation	Stimulus photographs		
	Unattractive male	Attractive male	p less than
Intelligence	3.53	4.27	.01
Morality	3.47	4.40	.005
Adjustment	3.53	4.80	.001
Interpersonal attraction	8.13	10.00	.001
Physical attractiveness	4.06	5.27	.01

Table 2
Means of Females' Evaluations of Male Stimulus Persons
Under Three Experimental Music Conditions

Evaluation	Music conditions			p less than ¹
	Avant-garde	No music	Rock	
Intelligence	3.60 _a	3.70 _a	4.40 _b	.05
Morality	3.40 _a	4.10 _b	4.30 _b	.05
Interpersonal attraction	7.70 _a	9.60 _b	9.90 _b	.01
Physical attractiveness	4.00 _a	4.60 _a	5.40 _b	.05

¹Comparisons between means were made using the Newman-Keuls procedure.

Means with non-common subscripts differ at the level of significance indicated. Means with subscripts in common do not differ.

Footnotes

¹ A complete description of the procedures and details of the statistical analyses employed in selecting the musical stimuli may be requested from the first author.